

My name is Denise B, and I've been recording instrumental piano music for the last 4 years, as well as performing and selling my music in various venues, including niche markets such as gift stores.

I have written over 50 songs during the 4 years I've been recording and performing, and my local and national fans (obtained by word of mouth referrals, not radio airplay), tell me they can't understand why my music isn't being played and featured on radio and TV stations. I have a local area mailing list of around 500 fans in a one hour radius who are notified (email or regular mail) when and where I'm playing locally, giving concerts, or signing CDs.

In the past 4 years, I've contacted numerous radio personnel at several stations in the Twin Cities metro area, as well as smaller towns within an hour of that metro area, trying to get my music played on air. NOT ONE radio station has played my music even though I've almost sold 15,000 CDs across the country. My fans are extremely excited about my music, and they do their best to give my music as a gift so their friends and family can enjoy my music, but with all the expenses involved in recording, advertising and marketing my music, I haven't even broken even on the investment in my music company. Why don't more people know of and hear my music? Because I can't get any for-profit radio stations to play my CD, not even on their special programming. They either don't listen to the demo, "don't play that kind of music", or aren't allowed to play independent artists from the area (in fact some radio station disk jockeys even freely admit they have no choice over programming

, and they only play the artists that the management allows, only those artists signed to parent company record label contracts). I don't know of any radio stations playing any other local artists, just the nationally-known famous artists. There really doesn't seem to be an interest in playing local music on the stations here, except for community-owned nonprofit radio stations. Their programming is not dictated by the owners of the station, their programming is determined by the local community members expressing what type of music they want to hear. On a local nonprofit community station, they get lots of calls from the community from fans who love my music. This is just one example of why each community should determine its programming, as the community itself lets the station know what they like and don't like.

The FCC should definitely NOT be dictating local programming. It is obvious that each community should be able to determine programming that works for them and their community, not be mandated by an outside organization. The FCC should not rely on market forces to determine the market, because that would continue to facilitate the current trend of local stations being bought up into the "big conglomerate" radio station companies that are currently dictating identical programming for thousands of stations that they own and monopolize across the country, (requiring stations to use the same programming for every area of the country, instead of local programming.)

The FCC should ensure that all programming decisions are made at the local level, and prevent the current situation from continuing (that of allowing radio stations to be bought up by the radio stations that already own over 100 stations.) Currently, one company in particular, owns thousands of stations. Allowing such a company to purchase more stations and silence local programming with their national agenda of making money from selling records off the artists their parent company manages should be against the

law.

Stations at the local level should be allowed to play anything they want (and that their public wants to hear, whether it be local artists, sporting events, etc.)

Radio stations should not get "local programming credit" for paying and sponsoring fund-raisers and charitable events. That gets more back into "buying approval" to meet the rules. They should be allowed to contribute to these activities as they choose, (like any other business, bank, etc.) but it should not count towards local programming. If such sponsorships were counted, it would eventually result in more of the same (less airtime allowed for independent artists and musicians, like many radio stations allow today.) Allowing sponsorships to "count as local programming" would essentially provide another "loophole" to close down true local programming.

Payola in its entirety is a despicable practice that ensures only those who pay or bribe get heard. All forms of payola should be eliminated.

Voice tracking essentially results in a more "national programming" (the same program for everyone, without local programming), and should be minimized or in some cases, eliminated. (The smallest form of it leads to larger forms of it.)

National playlists are extremely detrimental to local programming. Unless strict requirements are made (with law changes) that stations are required to play local music (of artists within a 100 miles radius of their station), local artists will never get much airplay, and will not be heard. Local programming is extremely critical in the long term success of the independent musician. A large number of the best talent never gets heard by the large record labels, especially if the genre of music is not what those labels are looking for. Radio stations should be REQUIRED to have a certain percentage of local content, or the current situation will never change, and many artists will NEVER be heard.

The biggest problem with low power FM stations is they have trouble raising funds to stay in operation. Such a local station currently plays my music, but with the large conglomerate-owned stations in town already established, with large dollars behind their efficient national programming, these stations will have a tough time staying in business beyond 1-2 years. Unfortunately, they provide great variety, but have a hard time paying their bills. Since it has been allowed for large conglomerate stations to buy up local larger broadcast area stations, it should be required that such stations (a) share revenues with the local programming stations since they don't provide local programming themselves, (b) provide a percentage of local programming time or (c) a combination of both.

I'd like the FCC to hear my heartfelt thanks for having a public proceeding for independent musicians to express their concerns and share their solutions. The future of music is at stake, and I am hopeful the FCC will take measures to prevent a large variety of music from dying, due to lack of radio airplay. Everyone in the music industry in the U.S. knows that if you want to sell CDs and be successful as an artist, you need to get your music known overseas. Once you have a large following there, the U.S. large record companies (and then large radio stations) will finally consider you for a contract, (once your name has become well-known outside the U.S.) On the contrary, other countries care about new music, new musicians and the

quality of music; the current environment in the U.S. has fostered a negative environment for U.S. musicians to ever be successful. As for me, I will give it 2 more years, and if I haven't replaced my accounting income with the music, I'll apply

for my CPA license here. It's a lot easier way to make a living in the current music environment in the United States! Hopefully, the FCC will take the opportunity to improve the music environment here in the U.S. to facilitate more choice in programming at the local level. Thank you for considering these issues.